

HO-51

Howard County Courthouse
8360 Court Avenue, Ellicott City
Public

DESCRIPTION:

The Howard County Courthouse faces southwest and is a two-story, five-bay by six-bay granite ashlar stone structure with a gable roof that has a northeast-southwest ridge and standing-seam copper roofing. The southwest elevation has a center entrance on the first story with paired doors, a large one-light transom, and sidelights. The doorway has severe Greek Doric pilasters, frieze, and cornice, with a parapet on top of the cornice. There are new twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash. At the corners are colossal pilasters with Greek Doric capitals that support a bipartite granite frieze and a wood cornice and raking cornice on the pediment. On the roof is an octagonal lantern that has Greek Doric pilasters at the corners, louvered vents, and an octagonal dome of flat metal that is painted gold. The first story has had a floor inserted, with offices on both levels. The main courtroom, on the second story, has architrave is crossetted. The bays between the doors and the center bay on both side walls have tall niches that were probably for stoves. The attic has three king post trusses that run northwest-southeast. The cupola in the southwest bay has eight five-sided posts that are hewn and adzed, with cross bracing between the posts.

SIGNIFICANCE:

With the creation of Howard District of Anne Arundel County in 1840, a prelude to the formation of a new county, it was necessary for the new district to establish its own courthouse, jail, and almshouse in what would become the county seat, Ellicott's Mills. The district commissioners accepted a lot from Mrs. Deborah Disney and in October 1840 selected Charles Timanus Jr. as contractor for the stone work and brick work, S. R. Powell for the carpenter's work, Bernard Fort for painting and glazing, and David Emmart for the iron work. The building as originally conceived must have been a simple rectangular box, since the stylistic details now present, the corner pilasters, cornice, and door surround with cornice were all part of a "change order" in February 1841. A resolution recorded on 17 June 1842 is of significance to the history of the courthouse, though it raises as many questions as it answers: "The commissioners have this day resolved to employ Mr. Samuel Harris to superintend, inspect, and measure the construction of the public buildings." The walls of the courthouse must have gone up slowly, since it was only in August 1842 that the commissioners solicited proposals for covering the roof. The fall session of court in September of 1843 was able to meet in the new building, though there were naturally some items that had not been completed. By the early twentieth century the county was outgrowing the courthouse and in 1938 it received \$40,000 from the Federal government to construct a two-story addition to the rear of the building. This addition was designed by Baltimore architects Buckler & Fenhagen and built by Seymour Ruff & Sons, also of Baltimore. The addition has, in turn, since been added to with a substantial granite structure that now serves as the entrance to the courthouse.

Inventory No. HO-51

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Howard County Courthouse

other

2. Location

street and number 8360 Court Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town Ellicott City — vicinity

county Howard

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Board of Commissioners of Howard County

street and number	3430 Courthouse Drive	telephone
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city, town	Ellicott City	state	MD	zip code	21043
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4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Howard County Courthouse	liber	157 folio	186
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city, town	Ellicott City	tax map	25	tax parcel	302	tax ID number
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5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
_____ district	<u> X </u> public	_____ agriculture	Contributing
_____ building(s)	_____ private	_____ landscape	Noncontributing
<u> X </u> structure	_____ both	_____ commerce/trade	_____ 1 _____ 0 _____ buildings
_____ site		_____ defense	_____ 0 _____ 0 _____ sites
_____ object		_____ domestic	_____ 0 _____ 0 _____ structures
		_____ education	_____ 0 _____ 0 _____ objects
		_____ funerary	_____ 1 _____ 0 _____ Total
		<u> X </u> government	
		_____ health care	
		_____ industry	
		_____ unknown	
		_____ vacant/not in use	
		_____ other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

7. Description

Inventory No. HO-51

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY:

The Howard County Courthouse faces southwest and is a two-story, five-bay by six-bay granite ashlar stone structure with a gable roof that has a northeast-southwest ridge and standing-seam copper roofing. The southwest elevation has a center entrance on the first story with paired doors, a large one-light transom, and sidelights. The doorway has severe Greek Doric pilasters, frieze, and cornice, with a parapet on top of the cornice. There are new twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash. At the corners are colossal pilasters with Greek Doric capitals that support a bipartite granite frieze and a wood cornice and raking cornice on the pediment. On the roof is an octagonal lantern that has Greek Doric pilasters at the corners, louvered vents, and an octagonal dome of flat metal that is painted gold. The first story has had a floor inserted, with offices on both levels. The main courtroom, on the second story, has architrave is crosssetted. The bays between the doors and the center bay on both side walls have tall niches that were probably for stoves. The attic has three king post trusses that run northwest-southeast. The cupola in the southwest bay has eight five-sided posts that are hewn and adzed, with cross bracing between the posts.

DESCRIPTION:

The Howard County Courthouse is located at 8360 Court Avenue, at the top of a hill on the north side of Main Street in Ellicott City, in northeastern Howard County, Maryland. The ground slopes sharply down to the southwest and northwest. There are roads on three sides of the original building, and alongside the northeast additions. The courthouse faces southwest and is a two-story, five-bay by six-bay granite ashlar stone structure with a gable roof that has a northeast-southwest ridge and standing-seam copper roofing.

Exterior:

The southwest elevation has a center entrance on the first story with paired doors that have one light over one panel. The panels have sunken fields and quirked Greek ovolo and fillet panel moulds. There is a large one-light transom and sidelights with two lights over one panel that matches the panels of the doors. There are granite ashlar piers between the doors and sidelights. The doorway has severe Greek Doric pilasters, frieze, and cornice, with a parapet on top of the cornice. Below the doorway are three granite steps between granite cheek walls. There are two twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash to each side of the door, and they have hinges for exterior blinds, plus a granite sill and pedimented lintel. There is a water table with a slight slope. At the corners are colossal pilasters with Greek Doric capitals that support a bipartite granite frieze and a wood cornice and raking cornice on the pediment. There are four metal louvers between the first story lintels and the second story sills. In the second story the center bay has a tripartite window with a twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash that has a narrow closed blind on each side. It has a pedimented lintel. There are three typical twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash, and the west bay has closed blinds. These four openings have flat lintels. The tympanum is blind. On the

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 1

roof is an octagonal lantern that has a rusticated wood base and a wood apron on top that is pedimented and has stylized antefixes on the ends. There are Greek Doric pilasters at the corners and louvered vents with a Greek key applied trim above them. The lantern has a bipartite frieze and an octagonal dome of flat metal that is painted gold and has an iron rod at the top. There is an USGS benchmark that is 233 feet above sea level.

The northwest elevation has a window well at the basement level, and this well has granite walls. There are rubble stone piers between closed-off window openings that appear to be original. This well is now partially enclosed with concrete walls and a standing-seam copper roof. There are steps down into the well on the north, with a doorway at the bottom of the steps that has a flush door with round vent holes. The first and second stories each have six typical twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash, with lintels that are flat on top, except that the first story west bay has closed blinds. The corner pilasters, frieze, and cornice match the southwest elevation. There are two interior brick chimneys, between the end bays and the next bay in, and they are set back from the eave slightly.

The southwest elevation basement is below grade and there is no window well. The first and second stories are identical to the northwest elevation, with the south bay having closed blinds. There are also two brick chimneys between the end bays and the next bay in. There is a two-story, two-bay modern ashlar addition on the northeast side of the courthouse that covers the original northeast elevation.

Interior:

There is a basement in the west corner of the building. The joists above are exposed in this basement and are sash-sawn and run northeast-southwest. The joists are mostly covered with pressed metal ceiling with a cornice that is quarter round and fluted, with leaves on it. There is also a band of pressed metal with a pebble finish around the edge of the ceiling and plain small squares in the center of the ceiling. The flooring above is sash-sawn, is tongue-and-grooved, and runs northwest-southeast. The top of the joists are cut unevenly rather than undercutting the flooring.

The first story has had a floor inserted, with offices on both levels. The windows match those in the main courtroom. The only surviving historic spaces are at the southwest end, where there is a vestibule inside of the front doorway that has a plaster ceiling medallion with eight overlapping cast plaster acanthus leaves inside a run plaster Greek ovolo moulding. Flanking the doorway on each side is a fireproof vault for records with a steel door like a bank vault. Next to the south corner vault is a fold-up cast iron sink, like those typically found in nineteenth century railroad cars. The spigot pivots up in order to close the sink, and the bowl pivots down to open it. The bottom third of the sink is fixed, with a drain in it, and the bowl must be tilted up to empty the water into this drain.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 2

The main courtroom, on the second story, has carpeting and new baseboard. There are four twelve-over-twelve double hung sash on both the southeast and northwest elevations, and the sash are all new. They are set in a recessed opening with one panel below the sill, and this panel is sunken and flat and has a Greek ogee panel mould. There is one panel on the soffit and each jamb has one panel above the sill and one below the sill; all of these panels are also sunken and flat and have a Greek ogee panel mould. The architrave is crossetted and has a quirked Greek ovolo that is broad and flat and has a bead on the backband. There is also a bead on the interior edge. The southwest and northeast walls are identical, and are of five bays. There are doors in the end bays and nothing in the broad center bay. The bays between the doors and the center bay have tall niches that were probably for stoves. The doors have two tall panels with sunken fields and quirked Greek ogee panel moulds. They are hung on cast iron butt hinges that have five knuckles. The architrave matches the windows, but also has a cornice on top that has a quirked Greek ovolo bed-mould and a Greek ovolo on the cornice. The ceiling has been completely redone. There are new benches that face southeast and a new judge's bench on the southeast that faces northwest. The railing between the audience and the court is cast iron, with a fleur-de-lis in the center and an anthemion both at the top and bottom of the railing; this railing appears to have been reused, probably from a porch.

The jury room is at the southwest end of the courtroom, and this space has been cut up to create an office, jury room, two bathrooms, and lobby. The original space is five bays long, with the center bay wider and filled with the twelve-over-twelve sash flanked by tall flat panels that appear to be original. There are three panels under the sill, one on the soffit, and two on each jamb above the sill. The window opening is recessed. The architrave is not crossetted but otherwise matches that of the courtroom. The other four windows have the same architrave. The baseboard appears to be all new. On the southeast wall is a steel ladder that gives access to the attic.

The attic is divided into three spaces, a one-bay space on the southwest that contains the framing for the cupola, a one-bay space on the northeast, and a four-bay center section. In the center section there are four holes in the floor, two each in the two center bays. The holes are 2 feet in diameter and are covered with boards that have one batten nailed across them. These boards are loose covers for the holes and the bottom sides of these covers are painted a grayish tan. The interior of the holes has large vertical lath with plaster that is painted a medium gray. These holes must have been intended for ventilation, with the covers being removed in the summer.

There are three king post trusses that run northwest-southeast. The bottom cord of these trusses is hewn. The king post is hewn and adzed on three sides and is sash-sawn on the fourth side. It is attached to the bottom cord with a long iron stirrup with gibs and cotters connection on the post. There are two struts off each side of the king post. The bottom strut joint is labeled "II" and this strut runs to the top of the queen posts. The top strut joint is labeled "III" and this strut runs up to the top cord. The strut to top-

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 3

cord joint is dapped and nailed. The bottom of the king post is dapped into the bottom cord. The top of the king post has a "Y" strap that wraps on top of both top cords but is not bolted to them. The top straps are bolted down to the top ends of the "Y" straps, and the bottom ends of the "Y" straps are bolted to the king posts. The queen posts have similar dapped joints and stirrups with gibs and cotters connection to the bottoms of the cords. The queen posts have one strut that runs up to the top cords, and the joint at the post is labeled "I" on the southeast side and "V" on the northwest side. The joint of the strut to the top cord is dapped and nailed with cut nails, and several of these joints have failed, with the strut having dropped. The queen posts are also hewn on three sides and sash-sawn on the fourth. The joint of the strut to the top of the queen post is mortised and tenoned, but is not numbered. None of the joints are pegged. The strap around the top of the cord on the queen posts is bolted to the queen posts. The joints where the top and bottom cords meet must be hidden within the stone walls. On the bottom cord, the southeast queen post joint is labeled "II", the king post joint is labeled "III", and the northwest queen post joint to the bottom cord is labeled "III". The hidden joints in the trusses must also have been numbered. There is a ledger board nailed to the bottom of both sides of the bottom cord, and the joists lap it and run southwest-northeast. The joists are 2¼ to 3 inches wide by 4 inches deep, and are toe-nailed from the side through the ledger board. The rafters are sash-sawn, though some have a hewn face. The rafters run northeast-southwest, rather than from ridge to eave, and lap over the top of the top cord. The rafters are 2½ to 3 inches wide by 5¾ inches deep and are spaced 23 to 24¾ inches on centers. There is board sheathing that runs from the ridge to the eave and the boards vary from 9½ to 17 inches wide. There is a metal roof above this sheathing, and it appears to be tarred on the bottom side.

On the southwest side are two brick chimneys that align with the niches in the courtroom below. The cupola framing extends into the southwest bay, with two posts that are set on cantilever sills set into the southwest wall and on top of the interior masonry wall. The northeast wall of the center section is new drywall on top of an interior brick wall, and there is no truss here. The top cords in this wall are mitered and butted at the ridge and are supported by four diagonal struts, two on each side, with lap joints at the top and bottom. The bottom cord in this wall is at least of two pieces of timber that are butted and have an iron strap bolted across them.

In the northeast bay the floor is lower than the center section. The southwest wall has two brick chimneys. The northeast wall has a raking board on the interior that the rafters lap over top of, and there are outriggers tenoned through this raking board but not pinned. There is a beam set into the northeast wall at the eave level, with outriggers tenoned through it, and these are pinned. This beam wraps around the northwest and southeast sides, but is placed against the wall and not set into it there; it also has outriggers that are pinned to it on the northwest and southeast sides. In the corner the outrigger is wedged, not pinned. This beam is 2½ inches by 7¼ inches and is set right against the stone wall. The chimneys have been rebuilt, with the bricks reused as some of them are covered with soot. The bricks are set in a Portland cement mortar.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 4

The cupola in the southwest bay has octagonal framing set in the center of the rectangular bay. There are eight five-sided posts that are hewn and adzed. They sit on top of four beams that run southwest-northeast, and these beams are set into the southwest wall and on top of the interior brick wall to the northeast. These four beams or sills are hewn and adzed, and are 12 inches wide by 14½ inches deep. One of these has been replaced by a steel I-beam. Some of the posts have a large iron strap bolted to the side at the bottom, and this strap runs all the way through the beam with a nut threaded onto a bolt at the end. The strap comes out at the bottom at an angle under the post. Set midway between the sills and the floor of the cupola above are intermediate girts that are mortised and tenoned and pegged between the posts. There is cross bracing above the girt in each bay, and these braces pass and are not cut to lap each other. The floor joists for the cupola run southwest-northeast and are supported in the center by two large beams that run northwest-southeast. There is a short post on top of the southwest and northeast girts to support the end of the ridge pole. On the northeast side, the rafters stop short of the cupola framing, and there are headers inserted between the ridge pole and a lower rafter to take the ends of the rafters that stop short. The top cord of the northeast wall is supported by a strut that is mortised and tenoned to the nearest bottom sill. The joint to the cord is dapped. The outriggers set into the beams on the walls of the southwest end are handled exactly like they are on the northeast end.

Grounds:

The landscaping on the southwest front has rubble stone retaining walls on three sides that create a courtyard in front of the building. These walls have granite ashlar capstones and short iron fencing on top of it, set into the capstones. The fence consists of alternating plain short vertical bars and longer ones topped with spear points; this fence is not old. There are several "U"-shaped gutter spouts set into the wall. The center of the wall is open and has nine steps up from the street; the bottom three steps are set between projecting cheek walls in front of the retaining wall. The retaining walls turn inward to form cheek walls for the remainder of the steps. The courtyard has old herringbone brick paving and an iron cannon with the British seal, a crown and "GR," and "12-1-0" and "P." There is also a granite monument to citizens who served in World War I, World War II, and Korea, and a granite monument with a bronze plaque to those who fought for the Confederacy.

8. Significance

Inventory No. HO-51

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	

Specific dates	N/A	Architect/Builder	S. Harris, C. Timanus, S. Powell
Construction dates	1841-43, 1938		Buckler & Fenhagen

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SUMMARY:

With the creation of Howard District of Anne Arundel County in 1840, a prelude to the formation of a new county, it was necessary for the new district to establish its own courthouse, jail, and almshouse in what would become the county seat, Ellicott's Mills. The district commissioners accepted a lot from Mrs. Deborah Disney and in October 1840 selected Charles Timanus Jr. as contractor for the stone work and brick work, S. R. Powell for the carpenter's work, Bernard Fort for painting and glazing, and David Emmart for the iron work. The building as originally conceived must have been a simple rectangular box, since the stylistic details now present, the corner pilasters, cornice, and door surround with cornice were all part of a "change order" in February 1841. A resolution recorded on 17 June 1842 is of significance to the history of the courthouse, though it raises as many questions as it answers: "The commissioners have this day resolved to employ Mr. Samuel Harris to superintend, inspect, and measure the construction of the public buildings." The walls of the courthouse must have gone up slowly, since it was only in August 1842 that the commissioners solicited proposals for covering the roof. The fall session of court in September of 1843 was able to meet in the new building, though there were naturally some items that had not been completed. By the early twentieth century the county was outgrowing the courthouse and in 1938 it received \$40,000 from the Federal government to construct a two-story addition to the rear of the building. This addition was designed by Baltimore architects Buckler & Fenhagen and built by Seymour Ruff & Sons, also of Baltimore. The addition has, in turn, since been added to with a substantial granite structure that now serves as the entrance to the courthouse.

SIGNIFICANCE:

With the creation of Howard District of Anne Arundel County in 1840, a prelude to the formation of a new county, it was necessary for the new district to establish its own courthouse, jail, and almshouse in what would become the county seat, Ellicott's Mills. The district commissioners originally accepted a lot along the Frederick Turnpike Road from Mrs. Deborah Disney, who operated a tavern nearby, in

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of

Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

August 1840 and advertised for proposals to build the courthouse. Unfortunately, none of these advertisements has been located, as yet. On 1 October 1840 the proposals were opened and two days later it was recorded: "The commissioners having opened and maturely considered the several proposals for building a court house upon the lot given for that purpose by Mrs. Disney, find, that the proposal of Charles Timanus Jr. for the stone work brick work +c by the perch + thousand, is the lowest and accordingly his bid is accepted. That the proposals of S. R. Powell for the carpenter's work is the lowest and accordingly his bid is accepted. That the proposals of Bernard Fort is the lowest for painting and glazing and accordingly his bid is accepted. That the proposal of David Emmart for the iron work is accepted." Attorney Edwin P. Hayden, who would shortly be building his own home, "Oak Lawn" (HO-284), next door to the new courthouse, was instructed to draw up the contracts and deeds. However, at the same time that this was occurring, the commissioners were busy reconsidering the location for the courthouse. The record is vague concerning what drove these discussions, though presumably the consideration of the project by various contractors and the process of considering these proposals brought to light potential problems with the proposed site. In any case, only three days after accepting the bids the commissioners reported that they had met in Mrs. Disney's garden behind Ezra Fell's lumber yard, which was the proposed site for the courthouse, and determined that the lot directly behind Disney's tavern, which Mrs. Disney had apparently offered as an alternative, was a more suitable site. Before the agreement could be concluded the commissioners left office and a new board took their place. This board confirmed the new location for the courthouse in December and set about resolving new issues created by the change in location.¹

The first issue the move created was the need for a road to get back to the site. Initially, the commissioners selected a point along the turnpike between Mrs. Disney's tavern and McLaughlin & Butler's store, which would require moving Disney's stable. After having this road surveyed, the board decided that the location was not propitious and agreed with Mrs. Disney to move the beginning point of the road to between McLaughlin & Butler's store and Ezra Fell's lumber yard, "and running thence a circuitous route to the Court House lot of Howard District, consequently the stable by this arrangement not to be interfered with" Because of the change in location, too, it was ordered that "Charles Timanus be allowed fifty cents per perch for the mason work, and seventy five per perch for the brick work of the Court House of Howard District in consideration for the removal of the site from the first place contracted for." Though we do not know what the original charge per perch was to be, hauling that heavy material up the steep hill to the site clearly required more work, and thus, greater compensation. By early January 1841 he was already being paid \$500 for work he had completed on the courthouse. RFPs were sent out in January for a fence "of locust or cedar...." for around the courthouse and jail, to cut the road through (which was about to change), and to dig a well and install a

¹ Howard District Court, Minutes, pp. 13, 15, 17, 18, 21-22. Maryland State Archives, C-1001-1. Hereafter cited as "Minutes."

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of

Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

pump. Charles A. McLaughlin was the low bidder for the fence and Joseph Carrick was the low bidder for the well. However, Carrick was negligent in pursuing the work and the contract was given to Charles Timanus. The contract was flexible because of the uncertainty of the ground being dug: "viz: for all hard rock, from 45 feet to the depth of 65 feet, six dollars; for soft rock to the same depth, four dollars; for earth, two dollars."²

The records give no indication as to who was responsible for the design of the courthouse, but they do indicate that the design was an ongoing process. The minutes record in February:

The former Board of Commissioners, having allowed Charles Timanus for certain alterations in the structure of the court house, but no mention of the same on the minutes of their proceedings, is this day sanctioned by the present Board of Commissioners, viz: 'Returned pilasters at the two front corners,' and 'single pilasters showing on the east and west side of the building,' and to 'surmount the same with capitals or cornice of cut granite,' to 'put a water table on the front, of two inches drip, or projection,' and to form a belt by the continuation of the window sills,' etc. for which he is to have two hundred and eighty-eight dollars (\$288) as per statement rendered.

The Board this day adapted and signed a plan for the court house of Howard District adding more beauty and elegance to that building, and differing in some cases from that which the former Board of Commissioners agreed to – the alterations are as follows: 'the front cornice he doth agree to put in at three dollars and fifty cents per foot, and the cut work about the door he will change to fine cut work at seventy cents per foot,' and in the event of any cornice being used about the front door, the commissioners to pay him for the same according to the kind required as per statement.³

The building as originally conceived must have been a simple rectangular box, since the stylistic details now present, the corner pilasters, cornice, and door surround with cornice (Timanus did end up using one) were all part of this "change order." It is not clear whether these changes were suggested by Timanus or by someone else, but they suggest that there was no single architect conceiving the plan of the building in the manner that was becoming common for major projects, especially in cities such as Baltimore. Architecture, as a profession, was still evolving at this time based on the efforts of Benjamin Henry Latrobe and his students, and others such as Robert Cary Long, Jr. in Baltimore. Rather, the commissioners seem to have followed the earlier pattern that relied on their own knowledge and that of an architect/builder. This apparently proved to be insufficient to the task of creating a courthouse that had a commanding architectural presence that would correspond to its commanding physical one on the

² Minutes, pp. 29, 27, 31.

³ Minutes, pp. 29-30.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

hill overlooking Ellicott's Mills. The changes created a Greek Revival veneer that was very popular for government buildings at the time.

Changes to the plan continued. In April the commissioners noted "that Samuel R. Powell, be allowed the usual rates of charges, for extra windows +c., that may be required in the court house, independent of the original plan, being discretionary on the part of the commissioners with having the cupola put on." The reference is unfortunately vague, so the number of windows in the building or their size or other configuration may have changed, and it is possible, though certainly not clear, that the lantern was being added to the plan. Another change was to the fireproof vaults that were a necessary part of any courthouse, for storing deeds, wills, and other court records. These still survive in the southern and western corners of the lower story, and would have been planned from the start. The original plan called for them to have brick arches for the ceiling, but this was changed to flag stones, probably because they would have taken up less space. The change was more expensive, however, and Timanus was "allowed seventy five cents superficial extra."⁴

In March 1841 the commissioners selected William Fort to provide the desks, chairs, and other fittings for the county clerk's office, and John and James Gaw for similar fixtures for the Orphan's Court. The road up to the courthouse site had been completed, but there were issues with water washing down it, requiring the installation of a culvert to divert the runoff.⁵

A resolution recorded on 17 June 1842 is of significance to the history of the courthouse, though it raises as many questions as it answers: "The commissioners have this day resolved to employ Mr. Samuel Harris to superintend, inspect, and measure the construction of the public buildings. Mr. Harris is to take the responsibility of the faithful construction of the entire works. He is to come out and attend to them whenever he may be called upon either by the contractors or commissioners. His compensation to be 300\$ which sum is to include the amount already due to him for services rendered, platting +c." Harris has been described by some as the architect of the courthouse, and the use of the term "platting" could refer to either drawing up plans (which he may or may not have conceived), but could also refer to laying out the footprint of the building prior to excavation. Unfortunately, the records do not mention his name before this time, though here they clearly suggest that he had already been active in the construction. Indeed, by this time – 18 months into the project – it would have been rather late to have engaged a construction supervisor, though there was still plenty of work to be done on the courthouse. Architects typically acted as a supervisor in order to insure that their vision became reality, though one cannot argue conversely that this means Harris was the architect; he could have simply insured that the commissioners will was done. Harris was in his mid 40s, and at his death in 1873 was described as "an

⁴ Minutes, pp. 40, 47.

⁵ Minutes, pp. 32-33, 55.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 4

architect and measurer, well known to builders and others for many years.” In 1837 he was listed in the Baltimore City directory as a carpenter, and by 1842 styled himself “architect and measurer of buildings,” a description he continued to use into the 1860s. Little more is known about him, though his reputation seems to have been in mensuration, not design, according to architect George A. Frederick. Nonetheless, Jackson Gott, a well-respected and rather prolific architect in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in Baltimore, advertised as the successor to Samuel Harris & Co., so he must have learned something about designing buildings from Harris.⁶

The workmen employed by Timanus and Powell, who were responsible for most of the work on the building, are in general unknown. One exception is likely William Henry Hays, who on 1 September 1840, at age 19, was indentured to Timanus “to learn the art, trade and mystery of stone mason-stone cutter.” To begin with, of course, Hays would have only supplied unskilled labor, though by the end of construction he could have been making a significant contribution. His indenture was to end on 9 April, 1843, so he should have been qualified at his trade before that date.⁷

The walls of the courthouse must have gone up slowly, since it was only in August 1842 that the commissioners solicited proposals for covering the roof. They reported: “Ordered, that proposals be issued for covering the Court House of Howard District, the metal to be of the best quality, single ledged [sic] or bright tin, to have large gutters and down spouts; the metal to be put on in the best manner, with raised vertical grooves [sic]. Proposals to state the price per square for roofing, and per foot lineal for spouting, and subject to inspection.” The walls were probably close to being finished at this time, leaving some time for raising the roof trusses and rafters, and then sheathing the roof, preparatory to putting on the standing seam metal. Details such as the form of the king post trusses were likely left to Samuel Powell to determine based on experience and best practice. Powell employed a double-strutted kingpost, with the lower struts abutting prince posts. This form is reportedly rare in builder’s guides and probably was taken from Asher Benjamin’s *The Architect, or Practical House Carpenter*, published in 1830. There are several differences in the details, however. Benjamin illustrates the use of a bolt connecting the king post to the tie beam, but the courthouse uses iron straps with gibs and cotters. The other variation is that Benjamin used several purlins to strengthen the rafters, which ran, in the traditional arrangement, from ridge to eave. In the courthouse, Timanus ran the rafters from one truss to the next, like one would with purlins. These horizontal rafters supported board sheathing that was laid from ridge to eave. Presumably Timanus chose this variation because the roof was getting covered with metal, rather than shingles or slate. Metal roofs were still a rather new introduction to American

⁶ Minutes, pp. 71-72. *Baltimore Sun*, 15 February 1873, p. 1, col. 8. Baltimore City Directory, (Matchett, 1837, 1842, 1847-48, 1853-54, 1855-56, 1856-57, 1860). “Recollections of George A. Frederick,” typescript, n.d., pp. 26-27. Maryland Historical Society. *Baltimore Sun*, 11 April 1871, p. 2, col. 4.

⁷ Joetta Cramm, *Historic Ellicott City: A Walking Tour*, rev. ed. (Woodbine, MD: K. & D., Ltd., 1996), p. 83.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 5

building, since lead and copper were so expensive and more affordable iron roofs were just becoming available.⁸

One would think that the design was set by this time, but that was not the case. While the walls were going up changes were still being made, so that in September the commissioners could report: "Ordered, that Charles Timanus be allowed the usual prices for raising the second story of court house an additional heighth [sic] to what the proposed plan calls for; and also, the usual price for brick per thousand used on said story of court house." The walls were probably raised to improve the proportions of the building, and perhaps to make room for a cornice, though the reason for the change in most of the design elements is never given. The bricks that were used were a substitute for Baltimore brick, which was originally proposed for the building. Five weeks after requesting roofing proposals the commissioners recorded: "The proposals for covering the court house of Howard District with single leded [sic] tin, have this day been examined by the Board of Commissioners and it appears that the proposal of Ezekiel Mills is the lowest, and is accordingly accepted." The lead-coated tin is typically referred to today as terne plate.⁹

Things were happening quickly at this time, including more design changes. On 10 September the commissioners stated: "Ordered, that the cornices of Court House as first intended, be omitted, the board having come to the conclusion to put on said court house a belfry." There is, of course, a stone architrave and frieze with a wood cornice that is supported with outriggers that are tenoned through tie beams set into the stone walls, with exposed pegs to hold them in place; this construction is almost certainly original, so the reference to omitting cornices could have been countermanded at a later date (though if so, it was not recorded), or could refer to additional features such as Greek Revival acroteria intended for on top of the roof. The belfry/lantern/cupola idea must have been kicked around for some time, without the need to make a final decision about it, but now the time had come and accepting it meant making other changes. Given limited funds, the belfry would have seemed more practical and would have still made a statement. It was more readily possible to add the belfry because the interior partition walls of the court room, on which the chimneys were placed, were built of brick. However, it would seem that provision was made to add the belfry from the beginning of construction, since the forward of the two interior walls, as shown in Buckler & Fenhagen's c. 1938 plans for the courthouse, is thicker than the other interior masonry wall. The logical explanation for this, if the plans are accurate, would be to carry additional weight. The girders on which the posts of the belfry sit are set into the front granite wall and rest on top of this forward interior brick wall. In an unrelated matter, the need for a wall around the courthouse, probably to hold back the hill in front of the building, had also become

⁸ Minutes, p. 75. Jack A. Sobon, "Historic American Roof Trusses: Kingpost Trusses." *Timber Framing* 72 (June 2004), p. 24.

⁹ Minutes, p. 79.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 6

apparent by this time and Timanus was ordered to "make an airy walling around the Court House of Howard District, and a wall in front as proposed by the superintendent." This is no doubt the wall that survives along Court Street today.¹⁰

At the same time that grand decisions were being made about design, small construction details were also being decided. In late September the commissioners "Ordered, that Samuel R. Powell put on the counter ceiling in court house floor, and allowed the usual rates." This was a layer of boards set between the floor joists, on which a layer of wet clay, often mixed with straw, was placed before the flooring was laid. It was used to eliminate drafts, and reportedly also retarded the spread of fire. Its use in urban buildings in the nineteenth century was common, but it was rarely used in farmhouses of the period. Around the same time Powell was ordered to "put block grounds around the doors and windows and baseboards of court house and be allowed the usual prices." Nailing blocks on which to attach baseboards and architraves were typically set into masonry walls as the masonry was being laid, so the "block grounds" likely refer to boards that were nailed to these blocks, onto which the baseboards and architraves would then be fastened. These grounds would sit proud of the wall and act as a level (like screeds) for the plaster work, which could be installed before the baseboards and architraves were added.¹¹

The commissioners made a partial payment to Ezekiel Mills in late October 1842, suggesting that the roof was probably covered by that time, enabling finish work on the interior to commence without fear of damage from inclement weather. They also paid Ferdinand Smith "for putting a pump in court house yard." Smith was not mentioned elsewhere in the records, but likely had subcontracted to build and install the pump for Timanus, since masonry and pump-making were very different occupations. All the while Powell and Timanus were also receiving payments for ongoing work on the courthouse. In November Bernard Fort was paid "on account of painting and glazing done towards court house." The painting was probably related to exterior finishes and the window sash, since the interior of the building was not yet ready. The fall court session was held in Emory Chapel because the new courthouse was not ready.¹²

If the roof was covered by late October, then the commissioners took a long time to get around to an RFP for the plastering, which only happened in mid January. Their records specify: "the entire building to have three coats, and a portion of the work to be finished with hard polish. The sand for the first and second coats to be washed sand, and the last coat to be of the best Baltimore sand, and worked without

¹⁰ Minutes, p. 75. "Proposed Addition to Howard County Court House, Plan First Floor, Plan Second Floor, & Section through New Work" Buckler & Fenhagen, Architects, n.d. Blueprints, Maryland State Archives, C-1709-12.

¹¹ Minutes, pp. 78-79.

¹² Minutes, pp. 82-83. *Baltimore Sun*, 20 September 1842, p. 4, col. 1.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of

Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 7

calced plaster. The contractor or contractors to furnish all the materials which is to be of the best quality, the work to be done in the best manner and subject to inspection. Proposals to state the price per yard for the polished, and for the plain separate . . .” A hard polish finish is not described in Joseph Moxon’s *Mechanick Exercises*, Richard Neve’s *The City and Country Purchaser and Builder’s Dictionary*, *The Builder’s Dictionary* of 1734, Peter Nicholson’s *The Mechanic’s Companion*, or Carl Lounsbury’s *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape*, but a version of it can be found in Joseph Gwilt’s *Encyclopedia of Architecture*, published in London in 1842. Gwilt explains:

For *polished work* on walls, the floating coat is mixed with equal parts of sharp sand and cement. The setting coat is $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in thickness, of fine net cement, rubbed down with grit stones and water; the grit is to be then well washed off, and when the water is gone, a stopping of fine cement mixed up stiff in a pan is to be applied and well rubbed in. This is then to be scraped off with a wood scraper, and the stopping repeated until a proper face is obtained, leaving a scum on the face to be taken off by the next grinding, which should be done with finer grit stones. The stopping is to be repeated and finally finished with snake stone, putty powder, and clean cloths. Three or four weeks’ time is required before a good polish can be obtained, it being essential that each successive stopping of fine cement should be allowed several days to harden before the surface is again scraped.¹³

Given the lack of mention of it, hard polish seems to be a technique that was introduced in the late 18th or even early 19th century. Whether or not American plasterers went to this much trouble for what they would describe as a hard polish finish is not known. Given the time, and thus expense, this was probably reserved for the walls of the courtroom only, to emphasize the importance of that room.

The commissioners never recorded who the low bidder for the plastering job was, though the records clearly indicate that John J. Wilson & Son were hired for that work. It was already well along by the end of March, when the commissioners recorded: “Ordered, that the ceiling joists over the court room passage and council room, be sheathed with plank to protect the plastering from being injured by persons walking over it. Ordered, that the plan of cornice for court room and passage be adapted [sic], the same being signed by John J. Wilson + Son, and be ordered to construct the same in said court house.” This indicates that a drawing was made of the cornice intended for the court room, and Wilson signed that drawing to signify that he agreed to execute it to the rendered design. The ceiling of the court room was already in place, and traffic in the attic above threatened to damage the plaster whenever

¹³ Minutes, p. 84. Joseph Gwilt, *The Encyclopedia of Architecture, Historical, Theoretical, and Practical*. (1842. Reprint, New York: Crown Publishers, Inc, 1982), p. 681.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 8

a workman missed stepping on a joist and landed instead on the plaster lath between the joists. Plastering the courthouse seems to have taken the first half of 1843.¹⁴

As the court room walls were completed reconsideration of the configuration and function of the space was taking place. In May a committee was formed, headed by Judge Thomas Beale Dorsey of "Mt Hebron", "... to examine the court house room of Howard District for the purpose of ascertaining whether any alterations be necessary in the position of the Judge's stand" They reported back in July that "... the public convenience, and the accommodation of the judges and of all persons attending the court would be promoted by removing the stand from its present situation to the north end of the court room," and Samuel Powell was ordered to make this change. Thus, the contract that Powell had made with the commissioners must have included the judge's bench, or stand, but it did not include most of the other furniture necessary for the courtroom. Authorization to purchase this was given in August, the commissioners stipulating: "The room to be furnished in the most economical manner"¹⁵

One would expect that the spaces in the plan were created for specific offices, and perhaps they were from the beginning, but the commissioners only formally assigned them to the various offices at this time. It was reported: "The Board of Commissioners have this day laid out, allotted and proclaimed the different rooms in Court House to be occupied for offices as follows: The three rooms to the right of front entrance to be occupied, the first by the Register of Wills, the second by the Board of Commissioners and the third by the Sheriff. The three rooms to the left of front entrance to be occupied, the first by the County Clerk, the second by the Grand Jury and the third by the Surveyor." The vaults were closest to the front of the building, so the rooms nearest them had to be designated for the register of wills and the clerk of the court, since they would be keeping probate documents and land and court records, which needed a safe, fireproof storage. This leaves open the possibility that the plan of the courthouse was created to be functionally somewhat open and flexible, where most offices were of equal size and most of their occupants could use any given space. Once assigned, however, they were to be fitted out to serve individual functions. Thus, in late August it was "Ordered, that Samuel R. Powell be authorised [sic] to put shelving in the county clerk's office and also in the Register of Wills office and make any necessary fixings required in the different offices." These fixtures were more in the realm of carpentry rather than furniture, which had already been ordered in advance for many of these rooms.¹⁶

The fall session of court, which began in September of 1843, was able to meet in the new building, though there were naturally some items that had not been completed. Just prior to the start of the session, the commissioners "Ordered, that Samuel R. Powell be authorised [sic] to proceed with the

¹⁴ Minutes, p. 89.

¹⁵ Minutes, pp. 102, 106, 107.

¹⁶ Minutes, pp. 107, 108.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 9

construction of the necessary, and fence around the Court House, agreeable to the plan of Mr. Harris superintendent, and allowed a fair and reasonable compensation for the materials and labor." The fence was required in the deed that transferred the land from Disney to the county, in order to protect her adjoining property. Neither of these features survives, and the appearance of them is not known at this time. The retaining wall around the front of the courthouse lawn still had to be finished, and this was not accomplished until the middle of 1844. In September of that year the commissioners "Ordered, that Samuel Harris, architect, give to Charles Timanus a bill of the measurement of wall, yard and other work not embraced in his former bill of measurement." This marked the final record of the commissioners regarding the construction of the new courthouse, and thus, its completion. There are many issues related to the building which were never covered in the official record, leaving many questions about how the building got to be, and there are many questions about its final appearance, since it has undergone numerous changes over the years. Some of these changes are known, others will eventually be uncovered in obscure records, and many will probably never be discovered. For example, the original heat for the building was probably stoves that were placed in the four niches in the court room, which is also the location of the four chimney stacks. When and how this was altered to central heating is not known. Similarly, there were four vents in the ceiling of the court room that were probably closed off in the winter and the covers removed in the summer in order to get air to circulate through the open windows and up into the attic. The lantern probably was opened at that time, too, to help draw off the heat, but the vents are never mentioned in the record and the design and function of the heating and ventilation is never covered by the commissioners.¹⁷

In late 1924 changes were made to the court room. The Ellicott City Times reported:

To begin with, the room has been improved with a coat of paint. The railing which surrounds the lawyers' tables has been moved forward several feet, the high prisoners' bench has been removed and the vestibule at the entrance has been taken away. All of these things taken together give a much greater seating capacity to the room. There are new seats throughout. More than two hundred can now be comfortably seated.

The stenographer's and clerk's desks have also been improved and the lawyer's tables cut down so that too much room is not taken up. The old chairs used by the jurors have been taken out and comfortable swivel chairs substituted.¹⁸

The county was outgrowing the courthouse at this time and in 1938 received \$40,000 from the Federal government to construct a two-story addition to the rear of the building. This addition was designed by Baltimore architects Buckler & Fenhagen and built by Seymour Ruff & Sons, also of Baltimore. The

¹⁷ *Baltimore Sun*, 11 October 1843, p. 4, col. 1. Minutes, p. 109. Howard County Land Records, 1-257. Minutes, p. 126.

¹⁸ *Ellicott City Times*, 20 November 1924, p. 1, col. 3.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-51

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 10

original proposal by Buckler & Fenhagen was for a long, narrow rectangular addition on the rear of the courthouse that was two stories tall for approximately the width of the original building, with one-story wings extending beyond the original courthouse. All three sections were to have flat, slag roofs. The first story of the addition would contain a book vault and expansion for the offices of the clerk of the court to the northeast, and a new room for the Board of Education to the southeast. Between them, in the center and at the end of the original central passage, was a circular stair. On the second story the back wall of the two rear rooms of the original building was to be opened up to enlarge these spaces for a jury room and the bar library. These were rejected and the new plan called for a deeper addition that was no wider than the original building, was three bays by three bays, and was two stories throughout, with a hipped roof. The first story would get a larger vault to the northwest, a central corridor with the stairway placed, less grandly, against the northwest wall, and an office and men's toilet to the southeast. On the second floor the rear wall was not to be opened up, though some windows would be converted to doors. The room arrangement ended up basically the same, with a more modest dog-leg stair in the central corridor. The rear wall would get a doorway in the center of the first story and an oculus on the second over the new stairway. A new glazing pattern was proposed for the original front door, but this seems not to have been implemented.¹⁹

The addition has, in turn, since been added to with a substantial granite structure that now serves as the entrance to the courthouse. This addition covers one of the three bays of the 1938 addition, and required that the roof of the earlier addition be converted from a hip to a gable. Among the changes made was creating two levels of offices in the lower floor of the original building, where there had originally only been one. This change obliterated the historic features on most of the lower level. Another addition is proposed for the northwest side of the 1938 addition, which will cover the two exposed bays.

¹⁹ Morris L. Radoff, *The County Courthouses and Records of Maryland, Part One: The Courthouses* (Publication No. 12, The Hall Of Records Commission, State Of Maryland (Annapolis, 1960), pp. 101-03. "Proposed Addition to Howard County Court House, Plan First Floor, Plan Second Floor, & Section through New Work" Buckler & Fenhagen, Architects, n.d. Blueprints, Maryland State Archives, C-1709-12. "Alterations & Additions to the Howard County Court House, Plan First Floor, Plan Second Floor, & Section through New Work" Buckler & Fenhagen, Architects, 1938. Blueprints, Maryland State Archives, C-1709-12.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. HO-51

See footnotes

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 1.63
Acreage of historical setting 1.63
Quadrangle name Ellicott City

Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries consist of the property lines for tax map 25, parcel 302, which encompasses all of the historic structures on the property.

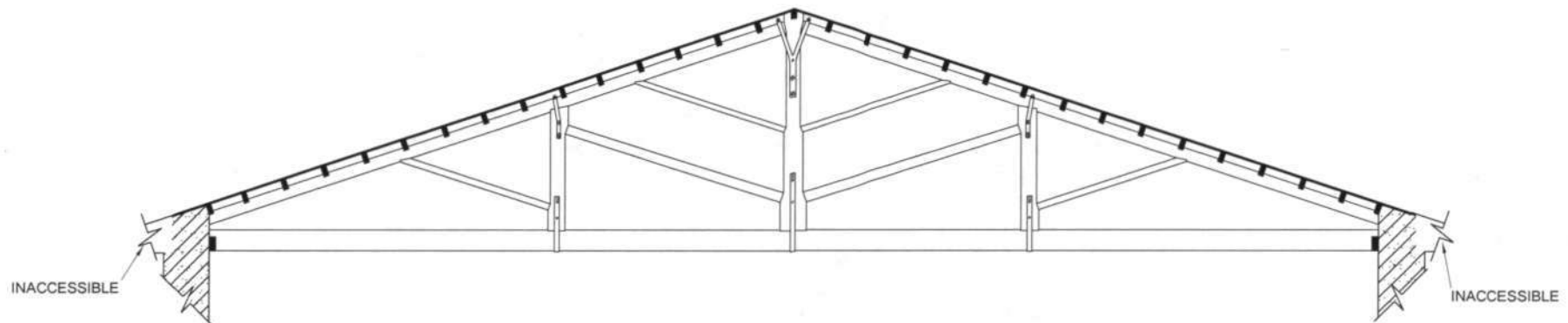
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Ken Short		
organization	Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning	date	June 2011
street & number	3430 Courthouse Drive	telephone	410-313-4335
city or town	Ellicott City	state	MD

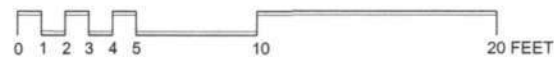
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



ATTIC FLOORING NOT SHOWN. JOISTS BELOW INACCESSIBLE.



HO-51 HOWARD COUNTY COURTHOUSE 8360 COURT AVENUE ELLICOTT CITY

KING POST TRUSS SECTION -- MEASURED AND DRAWN BY KEN SHORT -- JUNE 2010

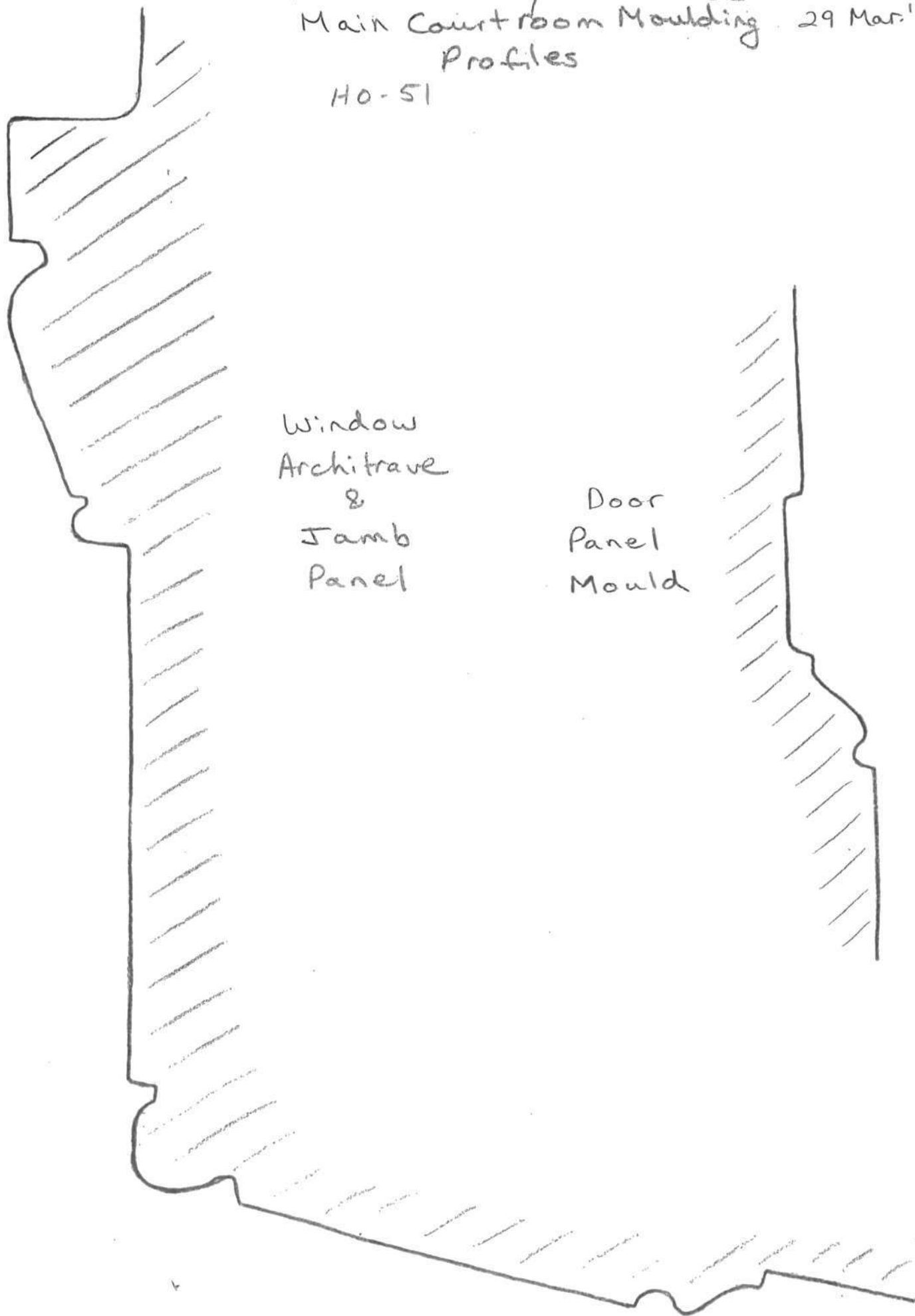
Howard County Courthouse
Main Courtroom Moulding
Profiles

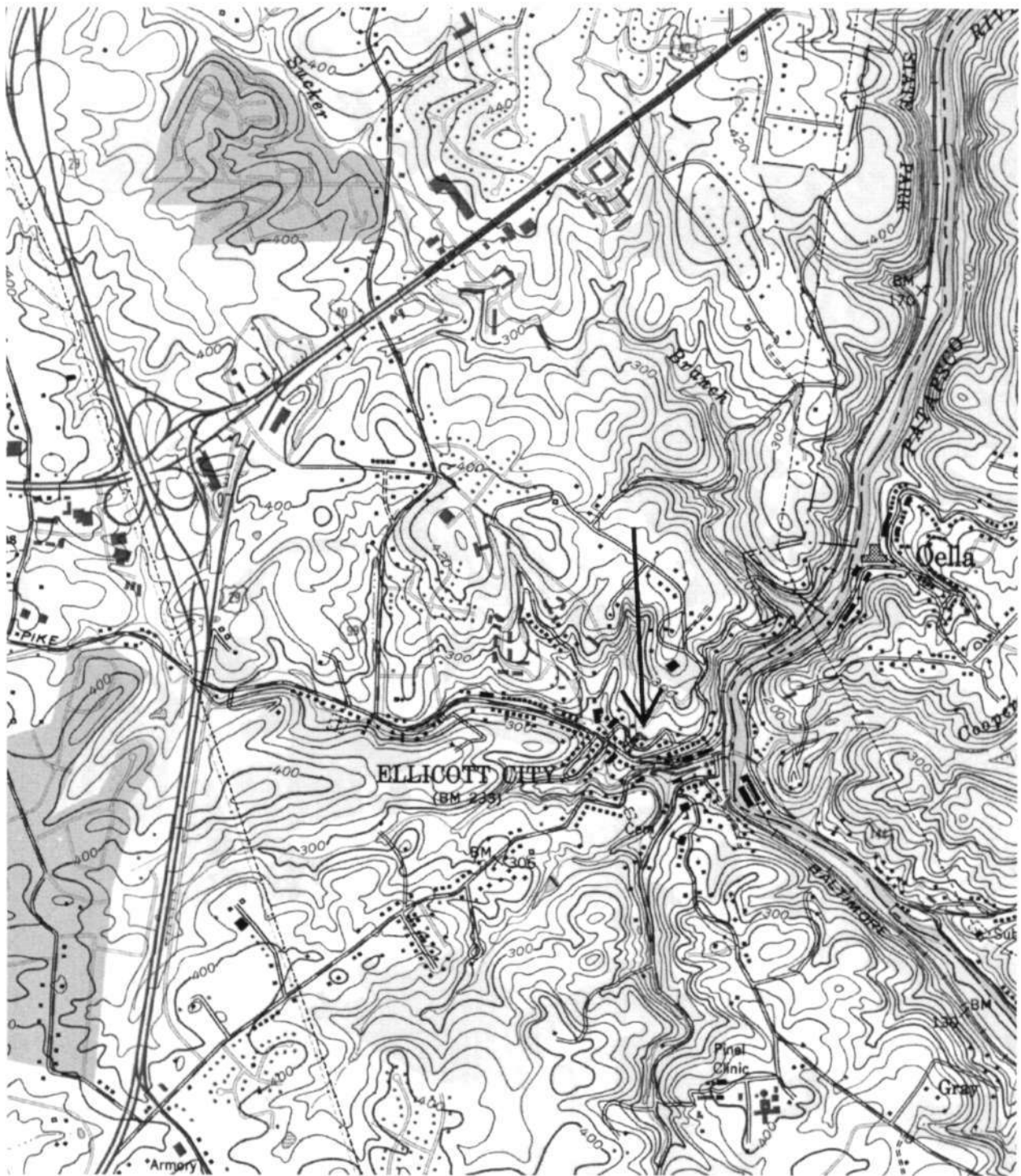
KMS
29 Mar '10

HO-51

Window
Architrave
&
Jamb
Panel

Door
Panel
Mould





HO-51
Howard County Courthouse
8360 Court Avenue, Ellicott City
Ellicott City quad

HO-51
Howard County Courthouse
8360 Court Avenue
Howard County, Maryland
Ken Short, photographer

Photo Log

Nikon D-70 camera
HP Premium Plus paper
HP Gray Photo print cartridge

HO-0051_2010-03-29_01
Northwest & southwest elevations, w/
retaining wall

HO-0051_2010-03-29_02
Southwest elevation

HO-0051_2010-03-29_03
Southwest elevation, front doorway

HO-0051_2010-03-29_04
Southeast elevation

HO-0051_2010-03-29_05
Lantern, vw. from northeast

HO-0051_2010-03-29_06
Vestibule chandelier

HO-0051_2010-03-29_07
Vestibule ceiling medallion

HO-0051_2010-03-29_08
Courtroom, vw. northwest

HO-0051_2010-03-29_09
Courtroom, stove niche and doorway

HO-0051_2010-03-29_10
Basement vault folding sink

HO-0051_2010-03-29_11
Lantern framing

HO-0051_2010-03-29_12
Roof framing, kingpost trusses

HO-0051_2010-03-29_13
Roof framing, kingpost truss top with strap

HO-0051_2010-03-29_14
Roof framing, kingpost truss bottom with
strap

HO-0051_2010-03-29_15
Courtroom ceiling vent, from attic

HO-0051_2010-03-29_16
Cornice framing inside north corner



NO LEFT
TURN

H0-51
Howard County Courthouse
8360 Court Avenue
Howard County, Maryland
Ken Short

2010-03-29
MD SHPO

Northwest + southwest elevations,
w/retaining wall

1 of 16



Mass. Historical
Society
100 South Street
Boston, Mass.

H0-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Southwest elevation

2 of 16



H0-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Southwest elevation, front doorway

3 of 16



HO-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Southeast elevation

4 of 16



H0-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Lantern, vw. from northeast

5 of 16



H0-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Vestibule chandelier

6 of 16



HO-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Vestibule ceiling medallion

7 of 16



HO-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Courtroom, VW, northwest

8 of 16



HO-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Courtroom, stove niche and doorway

9 of 16



40-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Basement vault folding sink

10 of 16



HO-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Lantern framing

11 of 16



H0-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Roof framing, Kingpost trusses

12 of 16



H0-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Roof framing, Kingpost truss top with strap

13 of 16



H0-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

Roof framing, Kingpost truss bottom
with strap

14 of 16



HO-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

courtroom ceiling vent, from attic

15 of 16



H0-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2010-03-29

MD SHPO

cornice framing inside north corner

16 of 16

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM
for the
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME					
COMMON: <i>Howard County Court House</i>					
AND/OR HISTORIC: <i>(Original section only)</i>					
2. LOCATION					
STREET AND NUMBER: <i>Court Avenue</i>					
CITY OR TOWN: <i>Ellicott City</i>					
STATE: <i>Md. 21043</i>			COUNTY: <i>Howard</i>		
3. CLASSIFICATION					
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS	
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	
				ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No	
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum		<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	
				<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____	
				<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____	
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY					
OWNER'S NAME: <i>Howard County</i>					
STREET AND NUMBER: <i>Court Avenue</i>					
CITY OR TOWN: <i>Ellicott City</i>			STATE: <i>Md. 21043</i>		
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION					
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: <i>Court House</i>					
STREET AND NUMBER: <i>-Ellicott City Court Ave.</i>					
CITY OR TOWN: <i>Md. Ellicott City</i>			STATE: <i>Md.</i>		
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):					
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS					
TITLE OF SURVEY:					
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local					
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:		

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	added to <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered			(Check One) Original EXTERIOR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered old structure		
				(Check One) <input type="checkbox"/> Moved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE						

7. DESCRIPTION - HOWARD COUNTY COURT HOUSE

A Classic Revival structure, built of locally quarried granite and crowned with a tall gilded cupola, the building is an excellent example of the architectural restraint--almost understatement observed in other area structures. Nine shuttered windows surround the plainly paneled front door. Windowed side panels lead up to a simple pediment capping the doorway. The building's classic lines then lead the eye to the cupola high above.

The original section of the Court House was designed and built in 1840-43 by Charles Timanus, who also did the Patapsco Female Institute. Because of the difficulty of transporting materials to the hill site it took more than two years to finish the building. The land was sold to the County by Deborah Disney who owned Disney's tavern on Main Street.

A newer addition was added to the building in the 1950's but it was placed to the rear of the existing structure so that ^{the original} ~~it~~ remains unchanged from the front and side views. It was constructed of cut limestone which the architect assured everyone would weather to match the native granite. Such a miracle will never happen of course and the addition will always remain just that -- an addition. Devoid of architectural interest it performs it's function of adding space to the existing Court House but does nothing else esthetically for the area.

8. SIGNIFICANCE**PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>Seat of H.C.C.</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | <u>Gov. since 1843</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

(1)
8. SIGNIFICANCE - HOWARD COUNTY COURT HOUSE

The original Court House in Ellicott City stands at the corner of Ellicott's Mills Drive and Main Street and has been rescued from destruction and restored by the Howard County Historical Society.

In 1840 a court was established in Ellicott City and during the years 1840-43 this small building was used as a seat of government.

In 1843 the existing Court House was completed and the functions of the county government began in earnest. Since then and until the 1960's the Court House was the only building housing county government offices with the exception of a few rental buildings in the town which housed such agencies as the Health Department, Department of Public Works and the police.

The county administrator's office, Circuit Court Room, court records, Treasurer, Clerk's Vault and Office, Register of Wills are all housed in the original building still. Files and information in the vaults contain everything from Grand Jury Reports to Stallion Pedigrees of 1909 as well as marriages from 1865-1975.

The grounds of the building are surrounded by a high granite retaining wall. Wide cut granite steps leading to a brick walk bring one to equally divided grass plots each shaded by

a large maple tree. On one side is a British cannon said to have been captured at the Battle of Bladensburg during the War of 1812 by "'Bachelor'" John Dorsey.

The other side of the lawn is occupied by a monument to the Confederate dead given on September 23, 1948 by the U.D.C.

The building is significant not only architecturally but because it has been a repository for Howard County Government almost since the government began.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Schofield - Sachse Map of Ellicott Mills, 1854
Ellicott City, Md. Mill Town USA, Celia Holland, Adams Press, 1970, pp. 203-206

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

Original site & acreage. Property site known as
"Capitoline Hill".

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:		COUNTY:	
STATE:		COUNTY:	
STATE:		COUNTY:	
STATE:		COUNTY:	

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: <i>Jean O. Hannon, v. pres. NEC</i>	
ORGANIZATION <i>Historic Ellicott City, Inc.</i>	DATE <i>1/75</i>
STREET AND NUMBER: <i>2416 McKenzie Rd.</i>	
CITY OR TOWN: <i>Ellicott City</i>	STATE <i>Md. 21043</i>

12.

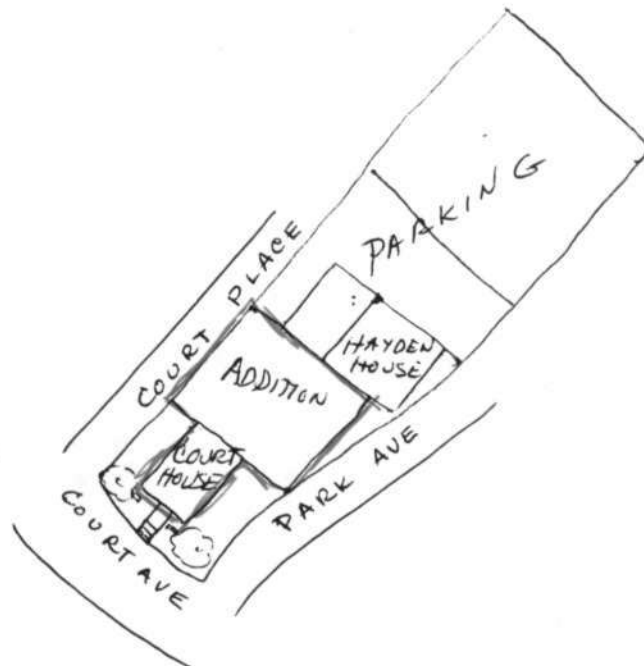
State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

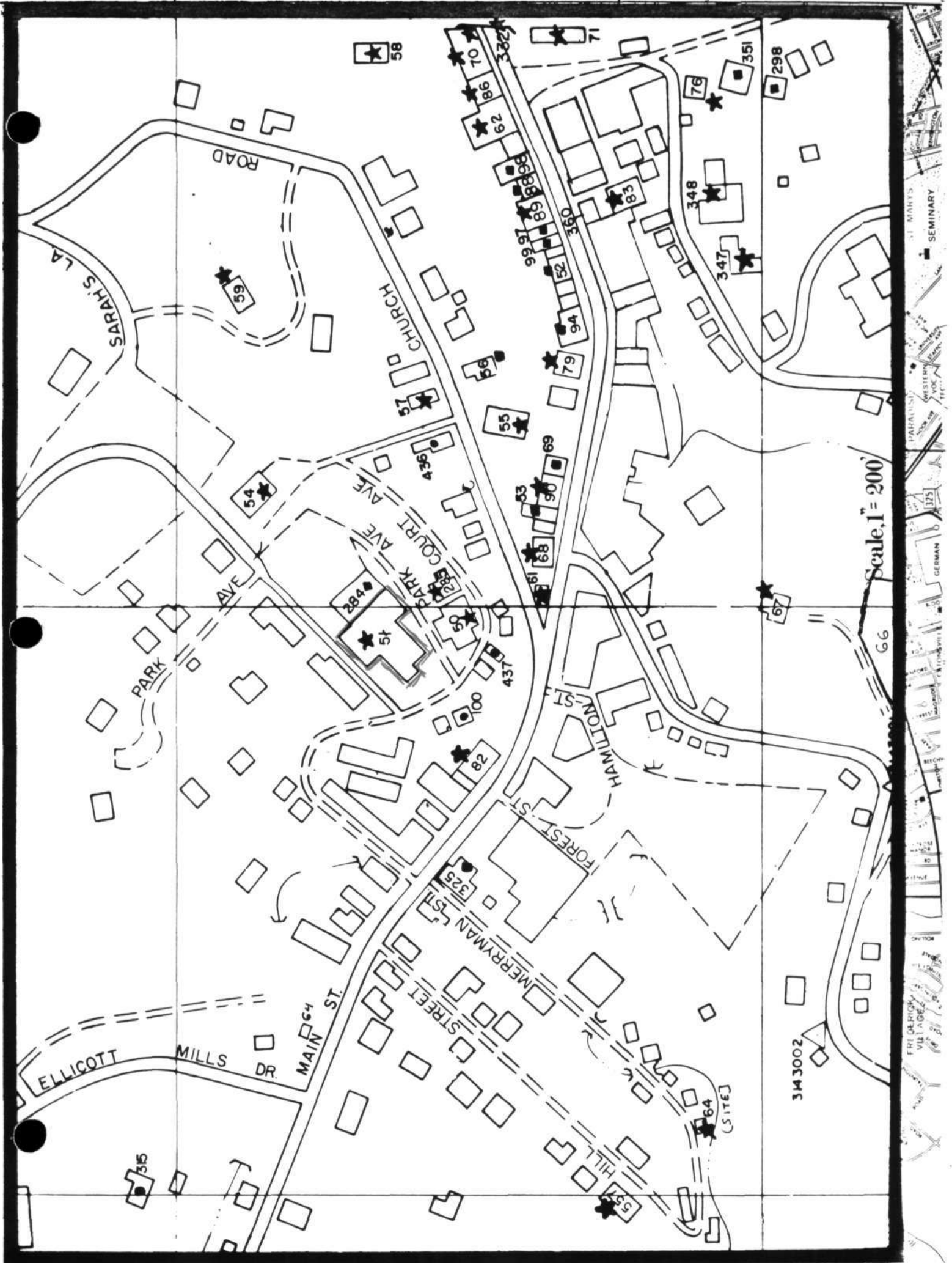
National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Signature _____

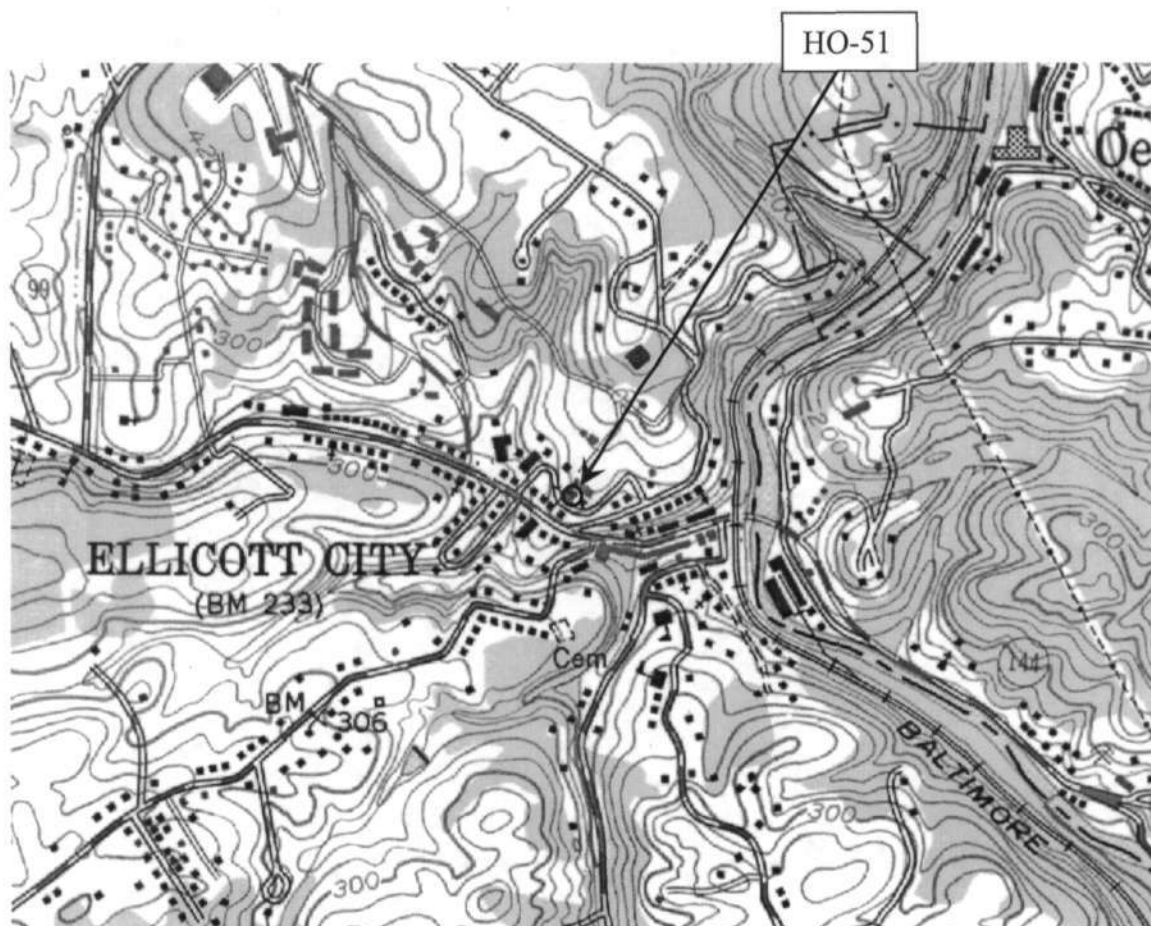
SEE INSTRUCTIONS



COURT HOUSE



HO-51
Howard County Court House
Court Avenue
Ellicott City
Ellicott City Quad.
Howard County

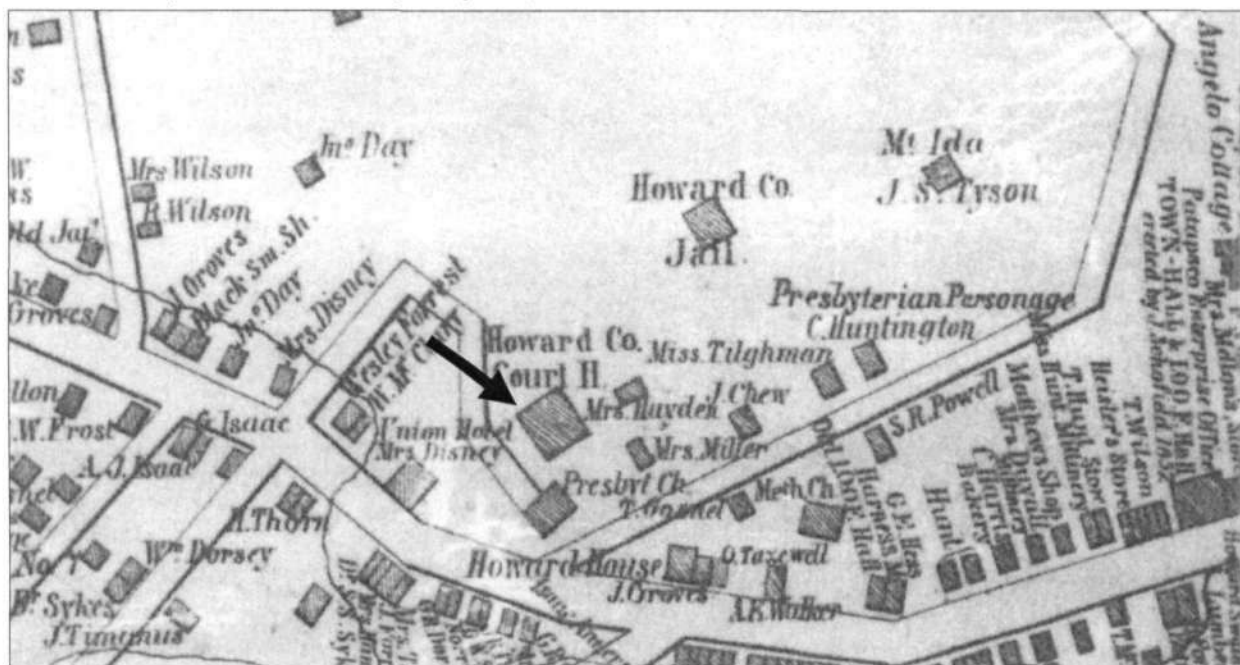


HO-51

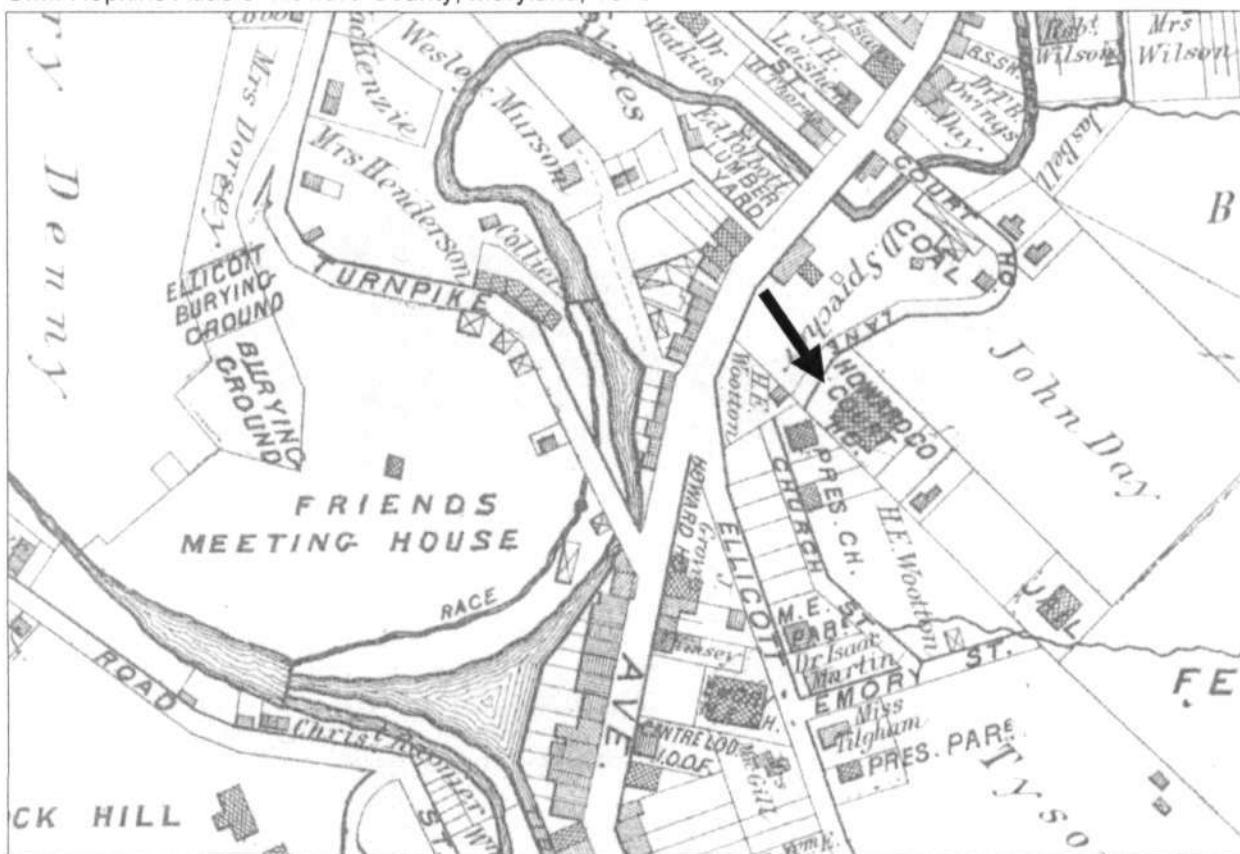
Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue, Ellicott City

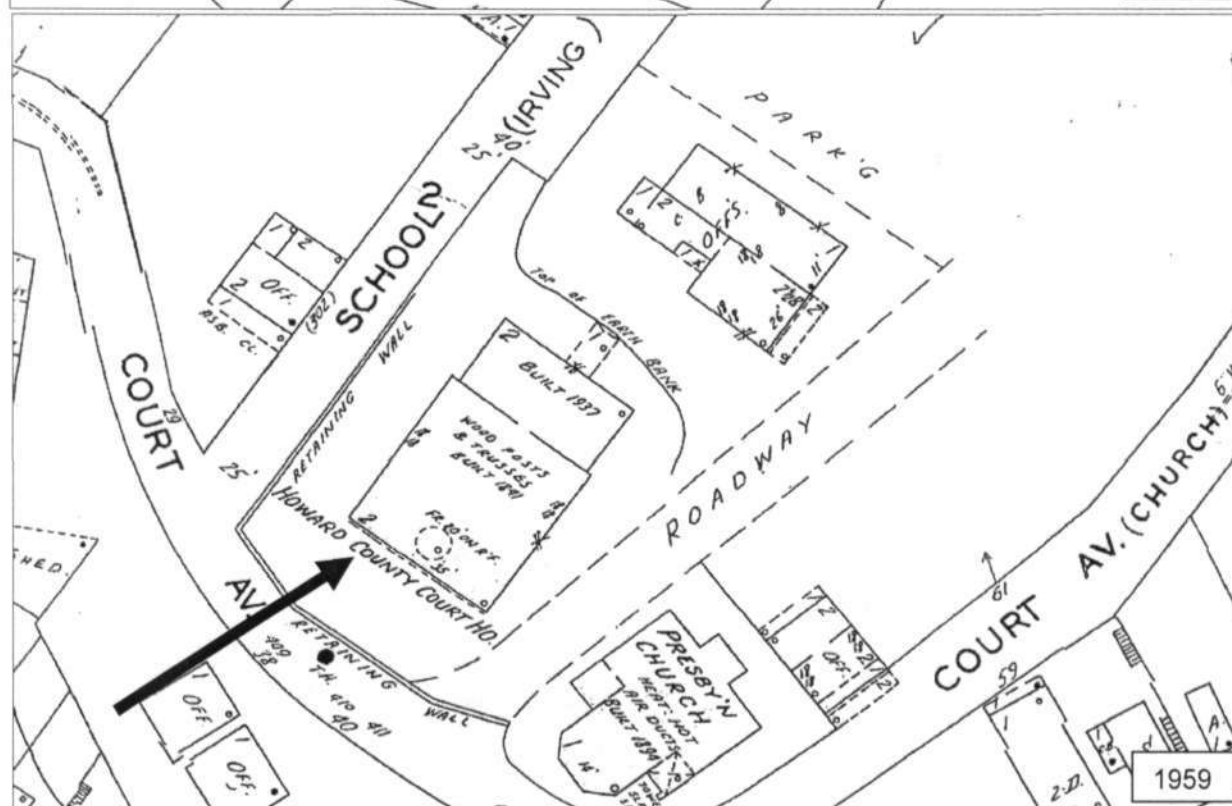
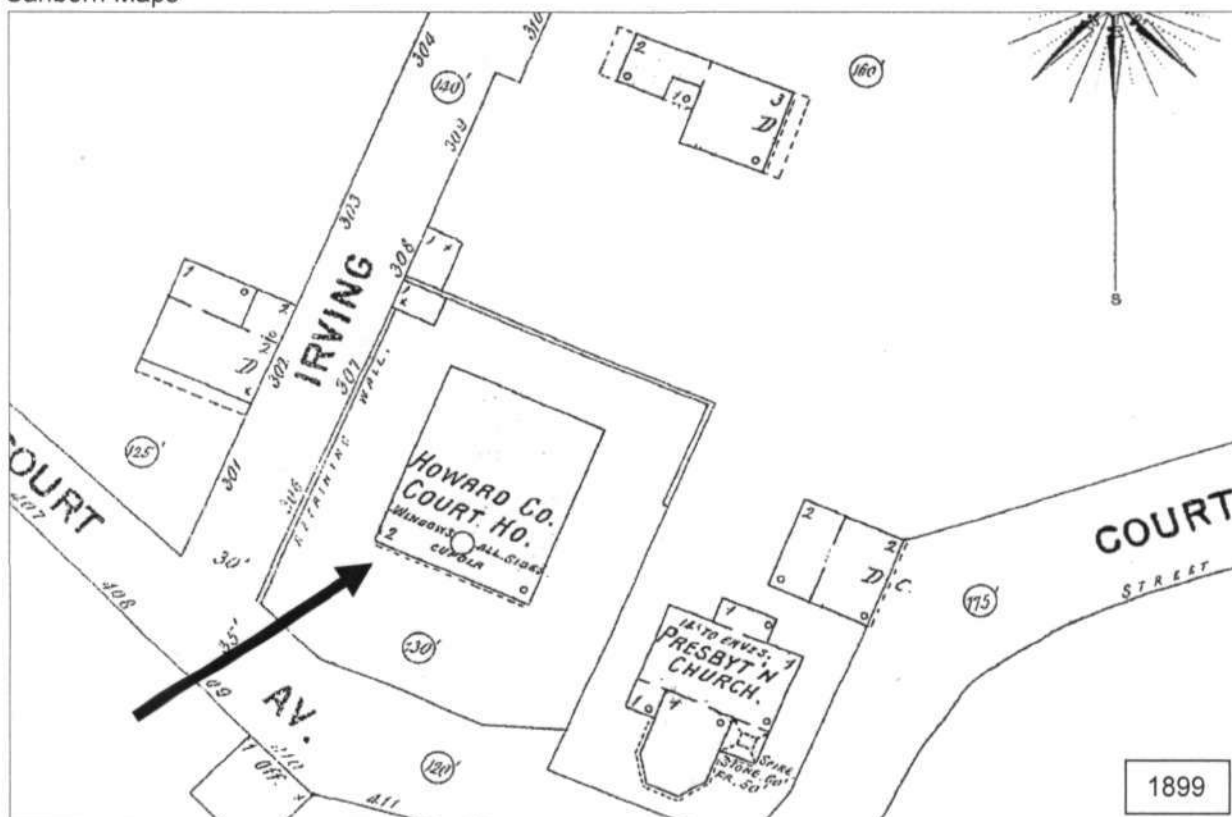
Martenet's Map of Howard County Maryland, 1860



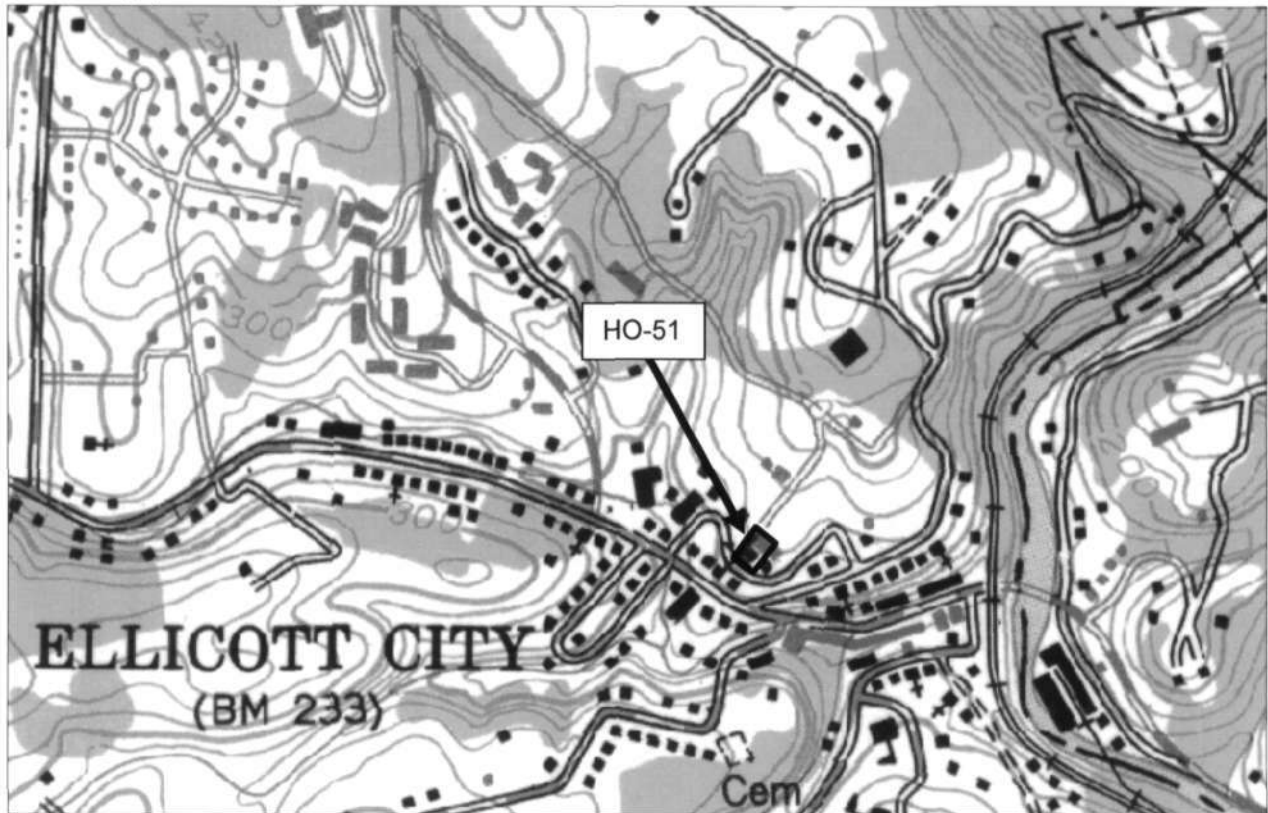
G.M. Hopkins Atlas of Howard County, Maryland, 1878



HO-51
Howard County Courthouse
8360 Court Avenue, Ellicott City
Sanborn Maps



HO-51
Howard County Courthouse
8360 Court Avenue, Ellicott City
Ellicott City quad 1953, Photorevised 1966 and 1974



Tax Map 25A, Parcel 302

National Web Map Service 6" Orthophoto Map, c. 2010



HO-51

Howard County Courthouse

8360 Court Avenue, Ellicott City

Photos by Jennifer K. Cosham, 11/28/2012

South elevation



East elevation





HOWARD CO COURT HO-51
HOUSE - SO SIDE (FRONT)

J. Hammer

2/19-75

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Ho-51	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: HOWARD COUNTY COURT House
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

Court Ave

CITY OR TOWN:

ELlicott City

STATE:

Md. 21043

CODE

COUNTY:

HOWARD

CODE

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT:

J. HANNON

DATE OF PHOTO:

FEB. 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT:

MHT (enclosed)

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

South side (front)



East side of
Canyon . Facing
South

J. Hammond

2/1975

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE

HO-51

COUNTY

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:

HOWARD COUNTY COURT HOUSE

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

COURT AVE.

CITY OR TOWN:

ELLCOTT CITY

STATE:

MD. 21043

CODE

COUNTY:

HOWARD

CODE

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT:

J. HANNON

DATE OF PHOTO:

FEB. 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT:

MHT (enclosed)

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

East Side of Court House facing South.



40.51

EA1100 H Ct. 1

333E

268 358
8/72

Howard County Courthouse



Ho. 51

8/11/60 H City

5578

JSE 8/72

Howard County Courthouse